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| <b>SUBJECT: Visitor Policy</b>   | <b>POLICY #: NINF-OUT-017</b><br><b>PAGE: 1 of 4</b>   |
| <p>MANUAL: Infection Control<br/> SECTION: Outbreak Preparedness and Management<br/> ORIGINAL ISSUE: Initial Visiting Restrictions June 1/20, Visiting Policy and Visitor Screening Protocol Sept 2/20, Resuming Family Visits Phase 1 June 16/20, and Phase 2 July 16/20<br/> PAST REVISIONS: Feb 12/21, Mar 22/21, Apr 6/21, May 11/21, May 27/21, June 4/21, June 21/21, July 6/21, Aug 9/21, Aug 13/21, Sept 8/21, Sept 14/21, Oct 4/21, Dec 21/21, Jan 27/22, Feb 7/22, Feb 25/22, Mar 14/22, May 16/22, June 8/22, June 30/22, Sept 6/22, Oct 27/22, Feb 1/23, June 22/23, Dec 7/23, Apr 18/24, Sept 12/24<br/> <b>CURRENT REVISION: November 26, 2025</b></p> | <p>REFERENCES:<br/> Ontario. Ministry of Health. Recommendations for outbreak prevention and control in institutions and congregate living settings. Toronto, ON: King’s Printer for Ontario; 2024.<br/> Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario; Infection Prevention and Control of Epidemic- and Pandemic-Prone Acute Respiratory Infections in Health Care. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2014.<br/> APPROV. AUTH: ICC, JOH&amp;S Committee February 24, 2022<br/> RESPONSIBILITY: ICC<br/> DISTRIBUTION:</p> |

**Policy:**

The Residents of Valley Manor are at extreme risk if exposed to a respiratory, gastrointestinal or novel pandemic pathogen. To ensure a safe and secure environment for vulnerable individuals, visitor restrictions may be in place, in accordance with the direction of the Ministry of Health, Public Health or the CEO.

Visitors should be reminded to consider their personal health and susceptibility to the virus in determining whether a LTC home visit is appropriate.

Valley Manor staff, contracted agency workers, volunteers and placement students are not considered visitors.

The main entrance to Valley Manor is the designated entry and exit point for all visitors.

During a pandemic that is respiratory in nature, it may be recommended that visitors wear a mask in all resident areas indoors except when with a resident in the resident’s room or when eating and drinking with a resident in communal spaces. Signage will be posted at the main entrance when masking is required. Masks will be provided and available at the front entrance as well. Masking may also be required during other respiratory outbreaks.

### **Policy Guiding Principles:**

- **Safety** – Any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated.
  - **Emotional Well-Being** – Welcoming visitors is intended to support the mental and emotional well-being of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.
  - **Equitable Access** – All residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.
  - **Flexibility** – The physical and infrastructure characteristics of the home, its workforce or human resources availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the current status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables to consider when setting home-specific policies.
  - **Equality** – Residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents or their substitute decision-makers have the authority to designate caregivers.

### **Screening:**

Visitors are requested to self-screen for symptoms and are strongly encouraged to avoid visiting when ill.

Visitors experiencing an illness should avoid non-essential visits to high-risk settings such as hospitals and long-term care homes for the period directed by the MOH, MLTC or Public Health. When visits cannot be avoided, such as for a palliative visit, the visitor is able to visit but must follow measures to reduce the risk of transmission. Appropriate PPE (mask, gown, gloves, appropriate eye protection, depending on symptoms) and hand hygiene should be performed by the visitor. If the resident being visited can also wear a mask, it is recommended they do so.

### **Vaccination:**

A vaccine may become available during the period of a pandemic. Valley Manor will follow the advice and guidelines from the Ministry or Public Health for vaccination.

### **Essential Visitors:**

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when there is an outbreak in a home or area of a home or when a resident is symptomatic or in isolation.

1. **Support workers:** Persons who visit to provide support to the critical operations of the home or provide essential services to residents. Examples of support workers include but are not limited to regulated health professionals providing services,

assistive devices vendors, social work services, legal services, post-mortem services, a person moving a resident in or out of a home, emergency services, maintenance services, food/nutrition delivery, mail services, election officials.

2. **Caregivers:** “Caregiver” as per the *Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021*, means an individual who,
- (a) is a family member or friend of a resident or a person of importance to a resident,
  - (b) is able to comply with all applicable laws including any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or a medical officer of health appointed under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*,
  - (c) provides one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the resident, including providing direct physical support such as activities of daily living or providing social, spiritual or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis,
  - (d) is designated by the resident or the resident’s substitute decision-maker with authority to give that designation, if any, and
  - (e) in the case of an individual under 16 years of age, has approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.

The decision of whom to designate is the responsibility of the resident and/or substitute decision maker. Caregivers may support up to two (2) residents who are ill, provided consent is obtained from all involved residents (or POA). Caregivers may also support more than one resident in non-outbreak situations, with consent.

Valley Manor is responsible for providing education and training for all essential caregivers about infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices. Prior to the initial visit, the following mandatory education and training is provided:

- Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment.
- Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment.
- How to Hand Wash.
- Education will be provided by the Infection Control Coordinator or designate.
- General visitors are encouraged to read the education pamphlet “General Visitor Infection Control Education”.

3. **A visitor to a palliative or gravely ill resident:** Visitors to those receiving end-of-life care for compassionate reasons, hospice services, etc.

A symptomatic visitor may not have physical contact and must maintain physical distancing from all residents and staff. Personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided to visitors.

4. **Government inspectors:** Government inspectors who have a statutory right to enter long-term care homes to carry out their duties must be granted access to a home.

**General Visitors:**

A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. General visitors include those visiting for social reasons as well as visitors providing non-essential services such as personal care services, entertainment, or individuals touring the home.

**General visitors are not permitted:**

- When a home or area of a home is in outbreak
- To visit an isolation resident
- When the local public health unit so directs
- Accommodation for general visitors, such as outside visits, may be considered. Please contact the Nurse in Charge for direction.

**Additional considerations:**

- Please sign in at the front office at the beginning of your visit. This will assist in communicating with visitors should an outbreak occur and contact tracing is required.
- Please practice good hand hygiene and cover coughs/sneezes.
- Please ensure the privacy curtain is drawn in shared rooms. This is a requirement if the resident is ill and/or isolating to prevent the spread of infection.
- One visitor table is available in the dining room area. Please book the table ahead of your visit.
- If visiting to join the resident in a meal, and the visitor table is unavailable, please call ahead so that a meal tray can be ordered for the resident so your meal may be shared in the resident's room.
- Pets are permitted to enter the home. Animals must have current vaccinations, be in good health, be of good temper and should be restricted to household pets. Animals must be kept on a leash in control of the owner. Visitors must provide copies of current vaccinations and veterinary information of animal being brought into the Home. Please refer to the "Pet Visitation Policy" for complete details.